



The Jarvis Bequest - A lasting legacy

Sometime in 2003, P.J. Temple received some very surprising news - Mary Margaret 'Sid' Jarvis of Halifax had left The Friends of the Public Gardens a substantial bequest in her will, \$131,000!

The money was donated in memory of her father, Thomas Wallace, and was intended for capital improvements to the Halifax Public Gardens. The Friends were asked to choose and oversee projects of substance that would have a positive, and lasting impact on the general public's enjoyment of the Gardens.

The Friends delivered on that obligation. In 2009, The Friends started the Victoria Jubilee Campaign with the objective of raising \$1MM to make badly needed restorations to the Victoria Jubilee Bandstand, its urns, and the Victoria Jubilee Fountain. We committed \$100,000 of the Jarvis Bequest money and pledged to raise \$100,000 more by appealing for public donations.

With our \$200,000 committed, HRM contributed \$300,000. Peter Bigelow from HRM helped us apply for and receive a \$500,000 matching grant under a federal plan for restoring national historic places. The million dollars was secured!

(Continued on page 2)



Restored decorative urn

Photo Courtesy of Serena Graham-Dwyer

Who was Mary Margaret 'Sid' Jarvis?

Sid Jarvis (born 1908 - died 2003) was an avid gardener with special knowledge about herbs. She was a native Haligonian, the second child (and oldest girl) of 15 children born to Tom J. Wallace (T.J.) and Ada McNeill. Ahead of his time, T.J., an optometrist, named his company T.J. Wallace, Sons and Daughters. Sid was very close to her father, and had wonderful memories of walks in the Halifax Public Gardens with him.

Sid's older brother, unable to say 'sister', called her siddie and Siddie or Sid became a life-long nickname. Sid met and married Robert Jarvis during World War II and lived in Toronto after the war. As a widow, Sid moved back to Halifax, living close to, and spending much time in the Gardens. Sid also left bequests to a Bursary Fund at St. Francis of Xavier in memory of her mother, Ada McNeill Wallace (who graduated from the Secretarial School there) and to Convent of the Sacred Heart where Sid was educated.

The Jarvis Bequest, Continued from page 1

The first feature to get a makeover was the Victoria Jubilee Bandstand. Designed by Henry Busch, built in 1887, the bandstand was in a precarious state by 2010. There had been much remedial work done over the years, some obliterating parts of the original design such as the placement of the soon-to-be iconic fiberglass red cap to alleviate severe leaks in the roof.

Much time was spent in the archives, by WHW Architects and by consultant and renowned restoration artist Kellie McIvor, searching for any information and photos in order to restore the bandstand to its original 1887 design as, not surprisingly, no blueprints were to be had!



Garrison Artillery Band in front of bandstand, 1902
Fanfare de la garnison d'artillerie posant devant le kiosque à musique, 1902

Photograph: Nova Scotia Museum
Photographie: Musée de la Nouvelle-Écosse

One of the hardest features to replicate was the original design of the ceiling. Finally a photo of Garrison Artillery Band in 1902 was found, providing the needed guidance to accurately restore the ceiling. The restoration was completed in 2011 and re-opened to much fanfare and positive reviews about the rich ornamentation and vibrant colours, although there are still some that reminisce fondly about the red roof and its flag pole attachment that allowed for a flag to be displayed.

The Victoria Jubilee Fountain, installed in 1897, was the next Garden feature to be restored. Water erosion and corrosion over 100+ years had taken their toll! The stability of the fountain had been weakened, the decorative features were cracked and discoloured and the water system didn't work! Unexpectedly, with great support from Halifax Water, the restorers were able to repair all these problems on-site, completing the project in 2012 on time and under budget.

The final step was to recreate the six decorative urns around the Victoria Jubilee Bandstand. These urns had been donated in 1887 by former NS chief justice, Sir William Young and were beyond repair. Artist Susan Feader created molds of what was left of the originals, and then recreated the decorative features that had been eroded away, remaking these urns in 2012. With money left over from the original campaign, Susan Feader is now working to recreate the Diana statue and repair the other Roman Goddesses in the Gardens. (Continued on Page 3)

The Jarvis Bequest, Continued from page 2

But restoring the Garden features weren't the only legacy of Ms. Jarvis' largesse. At the time, P.J. Temple was notified of the bequest, TFPG had been inactive for several years. PJ Temple, a former director on the Board, was galvanized into action. She recruited a number of volunteers, many well known in the local community, and reconvened a vibrant, active Board. Some notable achievements by various Boards since then include:

- Partly funded the restoration of the Victoria Jubilee features, the Bandstand, the Fountain and the urns and fully funded the upcoming restoration of the Roman Goddess statues
- Updated and twice reprinted the beautiful Public Gardens Book, the first reprint partially funded by a grant from the Jarvis Bequest
- Established a desk in Hort Hall where volunteers and student interns greet and help visitors
- Created volunteer-maintained social media sites that promote the Gardens
- Introduced volunteer-led free tours of the Gardens in several languages.
- Created the free Jarvis Lecture series on gardening related topics
- Planned, fund raised and supervised over 200 events during the 150th anniversary of the Gardens in 2017
- Researched and funded the creation of the old photograph displays found in the Gardens



Victoria Jubilee Fountain

Photo Courtesy of Barbara Bickle

In 2013 the Friends received the Parks Canada Sustainable Tourism Crystal Award of Excellence from the Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia. All of this is also a legacy of Mary Margaret 'Sid' Jarvis.



Photo Courtesy of Susan Feader

Last Chance to Pose as Diana!

Our Pose as Diana contest ends mid-September. Send us a photo of you posing as Diana between the information displays near the Bandstand and you could win a \$35 gift certificate to a local bookstore.

Full details are on our website at halifaxpublicgardens.ca and our Facebook page Halifax Public Gardens.

Last Chances to see our LIVE Diana statue!

Thursday, August 27 at 2 pm and 3 pm

Friday, September 4 at 2pm and 3 pm

Many thanks to these organizations supporting our activities around Diana's Return:

**Spring Garden Area Business Association
New Century Signs, Halifax**